

Abstract 371

TITLE: Strategies for Enhancing and Monitoring Treatment Integrity in Community-Based HIV Prevention Research: A Case Example

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ISSUE: Treatment integrity, the extent to which a treatment protocol is followed as prescribed, is critical for both internal and external validity of intervention research. Despite its importance it is given scant attention in intervention research and literature. In community-based outcome research ensuring intervention integrity is essential yet often complicated.

SETTING: The study was conducted as part of a larger project designed to develop and evaluate a cognitive behavioral approach to the prevention of high risk sexual and substance use behaviors among Black, Hispanic, and nonHispanic White heterosexual couples in a large urban area (Miami/Ft. Lauderdale, FL).

PROJECT: Several strategies were used to enhance and monitor treatment integrity in an HIV prevention clinical trial. These included: 1) stringent *group leader selection*, 2) the use of *well-specified treatment manuals*, 3) provision of group leader *cue sheets*, 4) intensive *group leader training*, and 5) *supervision* of group leaders. A standard semistructured questionnaire, administered weekly to intervention group leaders, was used to monitor intervention implementation.

RESULTS: In those areas monitored by the questionnaire (i.e., session attendance; participant reactions; group processes; and leaders' performance of, and adherence to, intervention protocol) results suggest that group leaders were *adherent* to, and *competent* in their implementation of, the treatment protocol.

LESSONS LEARNED: Implications for research and practice include suggestions for using these strategies to enhance and monitor the treatment integrity of community-based interventions.

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